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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Reptilia, Squamata, Tropiduridae, *Tropidurus torquatus*: Distribution extension.

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The genus *Tropidurus* contains 21 species (Frost et al. 2001) distributed throughout most continental South America east of the Andes (Rodrigues 1987; Frost et al. 2001). *Tropidurus torquatus* is a medium lizard with strongly imbricate scales, a fold with two shallow mite bags in lateral of neck, and a wide and robust head (Rodrigues 1987). It typically occurs in open areas and has one of the widest distributions of the genus, from central Brazil to northern Argentina (Rodrigues 1987).

There are two distinct geographic groups of *T. torquatus*, one in coastal Brazil, from Rio de Janeiro to Bahia, and the other comprising inland populations from the states of Minas Gerais, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Maranhão in the Cerrado biome, and Paraná, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo, and Bahia in the Atlantic Forest biome (Rodrigues 1987). In Argentina *T. torquatus* is found in the provinces of Misiones, Corrientes, and areas adjacent to the province of Chaco (Cei 1993; Alvarez et al. 1988). In Uruguay the species is found in Artigas, Tacuarembó, and Rivera Departments (Vaz-Ferreira and Soriano 1960; Carreira et al. 2005).

In the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, Lema and Fabián-Bauerman (1977) only cite Serro do Jarau, in the municipality of Quaraí, and Lema (1994) cites the extreme southwest portion of the state, in gallery forests of the Pelotas-Uruguay River valley on the border with the state of Santa Catarina, upper Uruguay River, and the Iguaçu River delta as localities for the species. Lema (2002) further restricted the species distribution to the western part of Rio Grande do Sul. Precise knowledge of a species distribution is crucial for management and conservation and helps to detect possible variations in ecological attributes throughout a species distribution. The present work aims to register new records of *T. torquatus* in Rio Grande do Sul on the basis of newly collected material and local herpetological collections.

We found a population of *T. torquatus* during a field trip in the municipality of Santa Maria (29°37'39.4" S, 53°52'21.8" W), near the border with the municipality of São Martinho da Serra, in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul (Figure 1). This population inhabits a sandstone outcrop on the border between deciduous forest and the naturally occurring open areas from Rio Grande do Sul known as *Campos*. This site was on the southern slope of the Serra Geral formation. Two voucher specimens were deposited in the scientific collection of *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* (ZUFSM 0529 and 0530).

To verify the current knowledge about the species distribution in the state, we gathered data from the following herpetological collections: *Fundação Zoobotânica do Rio Grande do Sul* (FZB/RS), *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS), *Universidade de Passo Fundo* (UPF), *Pontíficia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul* (PUCRS), and *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* (UFSM). For those localities without associated coordinates we plotted the center of the municipality. The new locality, the records found in the literature, and those recovered from the collections analyzed are shown in the Figure 1.

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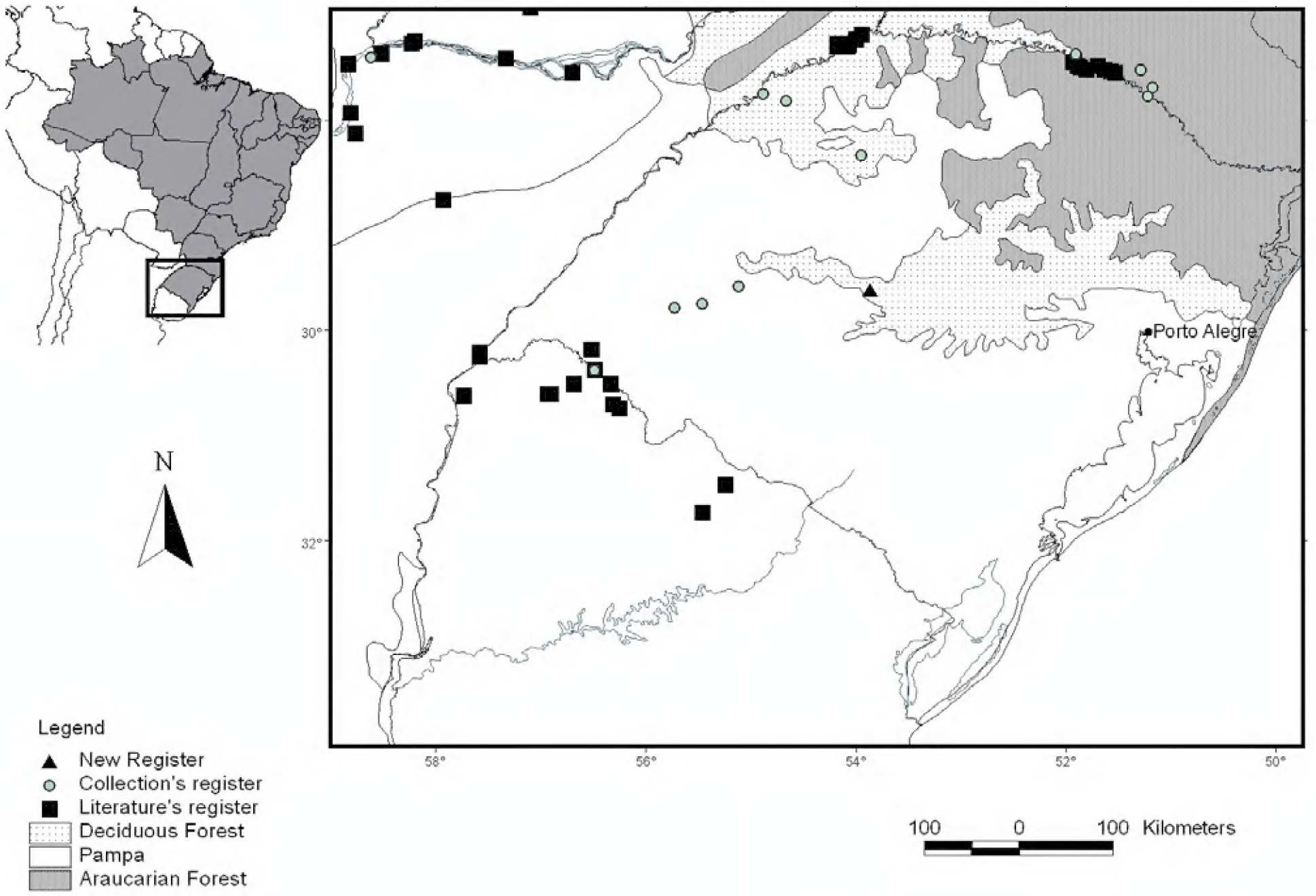

Figure 1. Distribution of the lizard *Tropidurus torquatus* in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil.

The occurrence of *T. torquatus* in Santa Maria increases the species geographic distribution eastward. Considering only published records, this new locality extends the species distribution 260 km east from Quaraí (30°23' S, 56°29' W) or south from upper Uruguay River (27°14' S, 54°00' W). Moreover, the revision of scientific collections indicated that this species occurs in Campos Novos (27°31' S, 51°17'), Peritiba (27°22' S, 51°54' W), and Anita Garibaldi (27°41' S 51°10' W) in Santa Catarina, and Quaraí (30°23' S, 56°29' W), Alegrete (29°45' S, 55°28' W), Santo Cristo (27°49' S 54°40' W), Ijuí (28°20' S 53°57' W), and Porto Vera Cruz (27°45' S, 54°53' W) in Rio Grande do Sul, and in Barra Grande (27°46' S, 51°13' W), between Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina states. In southern Brazil and along the Brazilian Cerrado, *T. torquatus* is very common and frequently found associated with disturbed areas such as gardens and houses (Kohlsdorf et al. 2006). In all observed areas the species seems restricted to rocky outcrops, important for thermoregulation especially in part of year with lower temperatures. Knowing that ecological attributes of *T. torquatus* can vary with different environmental variables and change along its distribution (Kiefer et al. 2005; Mesquita et al. 2007), a precise knowledge of the species geographic distribution is pivotal for a better understanding of its ecology.

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